



News Release

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April 1st Snow Survey Results

FORT JONES, CA -- Employees of the Salmon and Scott River Ranger District of the Klamath National Forest have completed the April 1st Snow Surveys. These measurements are a part of the statewide California Cooperative Snow Survey program, which is operated by the California Department of Water Resources.

April 1st is an important date for surveying snow because early April is historically when the snowpack is at its maximum; this date has the greatest weight when the State forecasts annual water availability. To gain additional data for April, three extra locations are added to the surveys for this month to supplement the usual five Scott River watershed snow measurement sites. Of these, Etna Mountain and Box Camp are also in the Scott River drainage, and Wolford Cabin is within the Trinity River basin. These additional sites are generally considered too remote or difficult to access on a monthly basis.

This month's survey indicates that the snow depth and water content are extremely below average with snow depth and water content at 1% of normal compared to historical values for April (see Table 1). Last April (2014), the snow depth was at 12% of normal with water content at 9% of normal compared to historical values for April. Since this winter is the warmest in California State's recorded history, precipitation fell mostly as rain and not snow which is reflected in April's snow survey results. The major water supply reservoirs are storing more water this year than last, but are still below the historical average. According to the State of California Department of Water Resources, April's readings are historically significant since the snowpack traditionally is

at its peak by early April before it begins to melt. Electronic readings today found that the statewide snowpack holds only 1.4 inches of water content, just 5 percent of the historical average of 28.3 inches for April 1st. The previous low for the date was 25% in 2014 and 1977. California's historically wettest winter months have already passed, and the drought is now firmly rooted in its fourth consecutive year. For the first time in history, Governor Brown has directed the State Water Resources Control Board to implement mandatory water reductions in cities and towns across California to reduce water usage by 25 percent.

The Snow Surveys are measured monthly during the winter and spring months (Feb.- May). District employees travel to existing sites to collect information about snow accumulation in the mountains of the Klamath National Forest, west of Scott Valley. The measuring sites are designated locations that quantify snow depth and moisture content. Snow site locations vary, some are located closer to forest roads while others require hours of travel by snow shoes and snowmobile.

The snow depth and water content are measured by a snow sampling tube with a cutter end that is driven through the snow pack, measuring depth; by weighing the snow core, the water content (water equivalent) is obtained. In addition to snow pack water content data, precipitation, and similar historic hydrologic data are collected. This year, due to current low snow conditions, a "grab bag" method of collecting snow was used which entails weighing a quantified amount of snow in a bag to obtain a more accurate reading. This method is applied to survey snow pack when there's little snow (less than 10 inches). The information is forwarded to the State of California, where the data is compiled with other snow depth reports and becomes part of the California Cooperative Snow Surveys program. The data is managed by the California Department of Water Resources and the information is used to help the State forecast the amount of water available for agriculture, power generation, recreation, and stream flow releases later in the year.

For more information, go to the California Department of Water Resources Website: <http://cdec.water.ca.gov/snow>. All news releases are posted on the Klamath National Forest's website at <http://www.fs.fed.us/r5/klamath/news/>

Table 1. April 1st, 2015 Snow Survey Results Scott River Sub-Basin

Snow Course	Snow Depth			Equivalent Water Content		
	Measured	Historic Average	% of Historic Average	Measured	Historic Average	% of Historic Average
Middle Boulder 1 (Established 1946/Elevation 6600')	1.3"	72.5"	2%	0.6"	31.4"	2%
Middle Boulder 3 (Established 1948/Elevation 6200')	0.6"	64.7"	1%	0.3"	27.7"	1%
Dynamite Meadow (Established 1955/Elevation 5700')	0"	45.9"	0%	0"	18.4"	0%
Swampy John (Established 1951/Elevation 5500')	0"	81.4"	0%	0"	32.1"	0%
Scott Mountain (Established 1986/Elevation 5900')	0"	50.9"	0%	0"	21.4"	0%
Additional Stations Completed For April						
Etna Mountain (Established 1951/Elevation 5900')	0"	70.8"	0%	0"	27.7"	0%
Wolford Cabin (Established 1949/Elevation 6150')	0.3"	84.6"	0.4%	0.2"	35.3"	0.6%
Box Camp (Established 1979/Elevation 6440')	1.2"	89.0"	1%	0.5"	36.1"	1%
Total Average	<1%			<1%		